1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

137 centers of old world agriculture in which the Neolithic
241 economy originated, possibly contributing to the initial development of ancient Egyptian civilization. Like the highlands of Yemen, the highlands of Ethiopia seem to represent ancient centers of TERRACED AGRICULTURE. It was in the Kaffa province of Ethiopia that coffee originated. It was carried to Yemen, planted there, and exported from coastal harbors (like the town of Mocha) through the Red
439 Sea into the Mediterranean. Coffee is still Ethiopia's most important export. Other major exports include sundried hides, sheep and goat skins, cereals, edible oils, and gold.

On the other hand, it is noteworthy that major imports consist primarily of items not of major importance in subsistence, but which reflect secondary needs: cotton sheeting (abujedid), cotton yarn, cotton piece goods, raw cotton, naphtha. The major exception is salt, still a major import.[6]

137 Many varieties of wild fruit and vegetables are eaten
262 only in small quantities, especially by the Amhara, partly because of the abundance of cereal crops and legumes, partly because of a cultural attitude that despises "wild food" fit for use only in case of crop failure, famine due to warfare, and for outcasts.

Another group of highly useful plants which grow wild in Ethiopia are the oilseeds. A number of these are planted and used in the diet.

137 In the lower regions of the plateau, mainly south of
241 the Amhara area, a "false banana" fiber crop called muz or
248

6. US Dept. of Commerce: "Ethiopia", OIT Vol.2, No12, May 1947, 4pp.

137 kobe (Musa ensete) is grown. This is used for making ropes
241 [248] of all kinds and bags for grain. In the south, the roots and inner parts of the plant are also used to make flour for
262 [186] food; but the Amhara despise this, considering it "food of slave peoples".

137 Vegetation is dense in the valleys, and the forests contain many valuable trees, including the Natal yellow pine. But in spite of the high yearly rainfall the northern plateau is comparatively little wooded. Foresters estimate that only 2.8% of Ethiopia is forest-covered, although they believe that it was once well forested. They ascribe this denuding to centuries of uncontrolled grazing and periodic burning-over. The best hardwoods that remain are usually in the least accessible spots, lowlands and gorges.[7]

137 313 The two most important trees of the highlands are the Tëd and the Zegba. The Tëd, a juniper (Juniperus procera) sometimes referred to as "pencil cedar" (or Juniperus phoenicoea), is fine-grained, easy to split, aromatic, durable (even when exposed to moist conditions in the rainy season), and termite-resistant. It is popular for beams in the better houses of chiefs, and for the simple native furniture. The Zegbá(Podocarpus gracilor), also an evergreen, is found in the warmer parts of the plateau. The wood is soft, easy to split, subject to decay when exposed to moisture, and thus more popular in drier areas. Non-resinous and tasteless, it is useful as a container for food, but is mainly used for construction and furniture. On the higher plateau

7. Chamber of Commerce of Addis Ababa: Guidebook of Ethiopia 1954, pp. 127-8; Kuo: Ethiopia, 1955, p.1-2; Simmons:Global Epidemiology, 1951, p.63.

824 [281] yellow fruit of an "embway" bush an astringent is made for depilation of hides.

[251] Butter is preserved and "perfumed" by boiling it with the leaves of the "ades" (myrtle) bush.

[263] Wild spice - used to flavor the flat taste of porridge during the long lenten fasting season, is obtained from a daisy-like flower "komär" with strongly scented foliage resembling camomile. But because it is "wild" it is despised at other times.

[262] Wild oil - in case of crop failure, "suf", sunflower seed (Carthamus tinctorus) is crushed for edible oil.

222 554 The element of shame at collecting rather than planting thus affects only those items directly connected with food consumption. The reason is that this would class the consumer with one who "hunts for subsistence", and such hunters are considered at the lowest social stratum.

Therefore, very little fruit is consumed by the Amhara, in view of the absence of any pattern of planting orchards. Even the wiesspread fig tree, planted for ages past for its broad shade, and used by ancient kings and judges when judging legal cases, is largely used for food only by children, ex-slaves and birds. Among the wild fruit consumed by these groups, are:

wild cherry - "gaba", a spiny tree with small fruit.

wild orange - "koshäm" (rumex abissinica), with sour fruit.

wild mulberry - "enjoriya", resembled blackberry, grows along rivers.

"gämärro" - (Capparis tomentosa), with edible red fruit.

243 patient oxen. If the farmer has no ex-slave retainers, his wife may help in the harvest. Even young boys help, particularly in protecting crops. The direction of the breeze [461] is carefully observed before winnowing. Work proceeds from sunrise to sundown (from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M.), with a rest from noon to 3 P.M., the hottest time of the day. At that [263] time the women bring barley beer, enjara bread, and a special condiment prepared from crushed "nug" oilseeds called "anäbabär".

Threshing by sticks instead of oxen is done in harvest of the "nug" and this may require some additional helpers.

241 Oil plants are cultivated and of considerable impor-
● 262 tance in the diet. They are considered field crops rather than garden crops:

"nug" (Guizotia abyssinica), the black Niger Seed, which is the most used vegetable oil of the Amhara. Travellers take it along, mixed with spices, as a staple. It is used in many items of diet. After crushing, the oil cakes are used for fuel (not fodder).

Flax seed (Linum usitatissimum), called "talbä", the second most common oilseed, of light brown color, consumed in similar ways and in drinks. It is not raised for the fiber, which is considered fodder or fuel.

Castor bean (Ricinus communis), called "gulgwas" or "gachma". This is not a field crop as much as [281] nug and talba, and not as much of a staple. Tanners use it for lubrication of skins. The emperor has urged increased production, but there

241
262 are no ready markets.

Sesame seed (Sesamum indicum) called "selit", is rather rare, and, as the name indicates, not originally native to Abyssinia. The Amhara, finding it difficult to grow, consider it an expensive and delicious delicacy, and consume the oil only as a rare treat.

Sunflower seed (Heliantus annuus), called "suf" is not a field crop, only occasionally planted, often semi-wild.

244 Vegetables are considered garden crops, and are planted near the hamlet on the hillside, while field crops are in the valley and river flood plains. Apart from kitchen gardens, which are considered necessities because of the spices that are consumed daily, other vegetables, particularly cabbage (gomän) are despised as poor food (food of p poor people or in times of famine). Consequently the Amhara raises few vegetables and small quantities.

Cabbage (gomän), and a white variety, "aydärgē", resistant to climatic change.

252 Chick-Peas, "shembera" (Cicer arietum), the most common, generally eaten roasted, but also boiled in the lenten season, and baked into bread to stretch tyeff in case of crop failure. Shembera is the proverbial staple, even in war and famine, never expected to fail. The proverb says:

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539 "She who has not born, will never carry her load;

233 the season usually coincides with lent, when milk, as an animal food, is prohibited to the Coptic Amhara, anyway. Sometimes a wooden trough ("gända") is made out of a tree trunk, and after the cows have drunk, the sheep are permitted to use it. Milking is done in a very tightly woven reed container ("gerära") "waterproofed" by smoking (then called "qwacha" or "chocho").

233 423 691 Sometimes a large extended family will try to enclose a reserved pasturage for itself, by means of rock markers, within a "bota" that had been general pasturage. This almost invariably leads to litigation, but it is not rare in districts where landholding Amhara families of long residence feel very attached to a particular territory, e.g. in hamlets near Gondar (Awura, Addis Alam vicinity, Lidäta) and in the Menz district of Shoa.

231 The cattle of the Amhara is the humped variety (Bos Indicus, or, Zebu), which has apparently replaced the earlier cattle of Ethiopia, the unhumped Bos Primigenius.[61]

The hump of the oxen is much prized, and they are bred for it, as well as for strength in plow-pulling, but there is no breeding to obtain good milkers. The predominant attitude is that of agriculturists, not of pastoralists. The hump of the ox is utilized in plowing, to keep the yoke from slipping off; in fact, in lowlands where horses are occasionally used for plowing, an artificial hump of straw, reeds, etc., is made to hold the customary yoke. The hump is also a choice bit for eating, "shänya läjegena" -- hump to the brave (warrior), still served to

251 262

61. Bettini, T. M.: Die Rindzucht in Italienisch - Ostafrika. Koloniale Volkerkunde, Wien, 1944.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

231
[262] the "great man" (feudal lord) and to warriors at rural, traditional feasts.

The cattle is not fat, since there is no intensive feeding. Even bulls are so patient that children can herd them, and cows are accustomed to walking home unescorted even through urban streets -- including Addis Ababa. With its broad forehead, long narrow skull, well-developed horns, the Abyssinian cattle still bears some resemblance to Primigenius, the cattle of Egypt and Nubia, and probably of Ethiopia prior to 500 B.C.[62]

232 Cattle is slaughtered for meat only in case of a barren cow and when the ox becomes too old to pull the plow. The male ancestry of a calf is given little attention, because it is not always possible, under the relaxed manner of breeding, to identify the paternal animal. Bulls are gelded by having their testicles crushed between rocks, and an ox so treated is called "wäräm" or "mäsina". Since the testicles are not cut, this primitive operation is not infrequently unsuccessful, and such a bull is then referred to as "amälat" and is troubled no further since it is believed that he is so virile that his virility cannot be taken from him without killing him. Bulls are gelded not to prevent them from begetting offspring, but to prevent them from "dissipating their energies" in sexual activity when it is needed for plowing. A rare secondary reason would be to fatten them for sale in preparation for slaughter.

Fully grown steers are fattened by feeding them chäw bälé, a mineral salt, for two years, or, where mineral

62. Ibid.

423 It is still tremendously difficult to make an accu-
435 rate and reliable survey of "capital" and expenditures--due to concealment of property for fear of taxes. As for the value of their own land, this cannot even be estimated by observation, for not even the owners know the value of their own land. For fear of alienation, and possible higher taxes on land found to be more fertile than declared, they actually do not want to know. Most Amhara land is not even measured, and most have no clear titles, except by local "custom". The value of the tuqul hut cannot be estimated since it is not a cash item and utilizes only the raw products of nature. The same is true of utensils and equipment. Even the plowpoint is bartered rather than purchased.

C. Dietary habits

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262 The diet in general is low in proteins and vitamins, but otherwise not inadequate.[64]

The mainstay of the Amhara is a round, thin, limp, slightly sour bread "enjara", made largely from tyeff grain. After the grain has been handground by the housewife, she mixes the flour with water and lets it stand about three days. Then she pours the thickish liquid on a clay plate (called "metad") about 2 feet in diameter, covers it with a high lid of tight reeds or clay which leaves much air space. The bread is thus baked for about four minutes on top of the triangular stone hearth. The result is a leavened, spongy-surfaced but flat-bottomed limp bread about 1/4 inch thick, and about 2 feet in diameter. The meat-curry is

64. Simmons, et al, Global Epidemiology, 1951. p.64.

poured over several layers of it; or spiced butter is smeared; or, especially in the fasting season or while travelling, condiments such as nug-paste or talba-paste are smeared. Variations in the preparation of enjara include some kneading during the fermentation process, adding some old enjara to aid in leavening, polishing the plate with oilcake of nug or talba to prevent sticking, using straw for the fire so heat will be spread evenly and uniformly.

Unleavened bread, "qitta", is baked mainly as a staple for travelling. The flour may be of other grains (e.g. wheat) or of a mixture of sorghum, barley, dagussa, even shembera. The flour is allowed to remain in water a maximum of 5 hours. If even less time, it is called "afla qitta", doubly unleavened. This bread is also baked when in great hurry to leave, as in warfare, and the Falashas believe that this was the "unleavanede bread" baked by the ancient Israelites on their Exodus from Egypt.

Another travel mainstay, elaborate to prepare, is a soggy, but not liquid, mixture of enjara and wot meat-stew, called "fetfet". It is carried in a reed basket which has been covered by a finely tanned morocco skin.

Another type of bread, thicker, more consistent, and resembling European varieties, is collectively called "dabbo". It is baked only for rare occasions, such as religious feasts, e.g. "masqal", the Feast of the Cross. Therefore, it is usually made from the luxury grain, wheat, and only the poor add barley or tyeff; to stretch the wheat. The grain is first softened in water; then husked in a wodden mortar; then ground into fine flour. This is then knea-

252 ded, with water, in a wooden bowl, "gäbätē". Various spices
262 and condiments are added. The dough is left to rise at least 5 hours, and the meted plate is preheated. Leaves of "koba", or the large leaves of the "embush" plant are spread on the meted plate (preferable banana leaves when available). After the clay plate has been rubbed with "ketketa" leaves (Dodonea viscosa), and the dough is evenly spread on the leaves, and covered with more leaves, a clay lid is sealed around the edges with mud. Wood from the hearth is now placed on top of the lid, until only glowing embers are left underneath. With a properly smoldering fire the dabbo can be baked in two hours; but for flavor the dabbo is left sealed for some hours more. The result is a massive bread, about 2 inches thick, 2 feet in diameter, with distinct crust, and very tasty. Only in the wealthier monasteries, where it is referred to as "dabyē" is it a daily staple. (e.g. in Däbra Libanos it is cut into four quarters, and each monk receives a specific number of quarters according to his rank) Variations of baking include pouring the dough in more liquid form, or baking the leaves filled with heavy dough in hot ashes rather than in the clay plates.

The second most common item of food is the "wot", a peppered spiced sauce which may or may not contain meat. Innumerable variations exist: this is usually the only dish in which the housewife has the opportunity to develop her own recipes, by adding certain spices, etc. Some of these spices are even imported from Yemen and are for sale at all major markets, even remote ones, although most spices

252 262 are raised in the housewife's kitchen garden. Every husband of pride claims to be able to distinguish the wot of his wife. Among spices used are:

263 [278] Ethiopian spices, raised by Amhara:

"Tena Adam" (lit. health of Adam), very aromatic. Important medicine against buda spirit (evil eye).

This is Rue (Ruta graveolens, Ruta hortensis).

Fenugreek (Trigonella Foenumgroecum), called "Abush"

Coriander (Coriandrum sativum), "dembelal". Cheaper than "bärbäre" and used to replace it.

Sweet Basil (Ocinum Basilicum), called "bäsobela" or "zäqa qebye"

Bärbäre, the all-important red peppery major garden crop.

Ginger, called "zendjebel". It is used unscraped.

[273] Caraway seed (Carum carvi) called "enselal", also used to make "araqi" intoxicant drink.

"Abusda", a dark seed resembling nug. Also called "tequr azmud".

Mustard seed, called "shenfa", ground to condiment.

Thyme, called "azmud", in light and dark varieties.

Wild Thyme, "tosen".

Garlic, called "näch shenkurt" (lit. white onion).

Spices used by Amhara, but bought on market, including those of Yemen importation:

Cardamon, called "korärima". (Elettaria paradise).

Saffron (Crocus sativus), called "erd", used to add golden orange color to reddish "wot".

Cumin (Cuminium cynisum), called "kamun".

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

263 "afär kochär" resembling nutmeg.

Capsicum (Cayenne pepper), possibly introduced by the Portuguese. Called "qundo bärbäre".

252 262 263 A number of these spices are pre-mixed, some added later to the wot. A mixture of bärbäre powder, a salt called "duddus", and garlic, called "awazé", is kept as a staple and also carried by travellers. Vegetables such as cabbage ("gomänzär") and pumpkin slices ("dubba)" are boiled in the "wät". Sesame seed ("sälit", Sesamum indicum) add purplish spots of oil content to the wot. Aroma is added by "senbul" (Spica celtica), expensive and therefore rare.

The most common wot is "qay wät". Chick-peas are pre-fried with red onion. Water, mashed red pepper ("delleh") and butter are added, stirred and heated. Finely sliced meat is then added, and black spice (tequr azmud) is sprayed over the boiling mixture. More water is added and stirring continues. . Some add a bit of barley beer, others pea flour.

When fresh beef is used on Sundays or at special feasts, the red pepper wot is called "zegen wot". The meat is lightly boiled, and minced; onions are minced and slowly roasted, and the whole is boiled with pre-roasted fenugreek spice, and with red barbare pepper. Then butter is added. When this is well cooked, and the host can afford it, the following spices are added: white azmud ("näch azmud"), black azmud (both thyme); ginger; sweet basil; cardamon seed. After cooking, capsicum is sprinkled over the settling stew, and other spices according to individual preference.

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262 For the less well-to-do, the cheapest meat is chicken, and this red pepper stew is called "qäy doro wät". Slaughtering, even of chicken, must be done by men. The pious pronounce the invocation, "In the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, one Divinity"(because of the Monophysite faith). Then the housewife takes over, removes the feathers in boiling water, singes the skin, inflates the outer skin by blowing into the cut skin near the throat. She then cleans the chicken and rubs it with pea flour. Inner organs and wings and legs are washed with salt and lemon juice, then lightly roasted. In another pan, minced red onion, red pepper and other spices are fired in butter, water is added and stirred, ground salt is powdered over it. Then boiled, shelled eggs are added. Now all chicken parts are boiled with this prepared mixture, in a deeper clay pot.

Whenever any of these vegetable or meat stews is boiled without red pepper, the stew is called "alecha", and, unless this dish is added to the menu for variety, it is considered a poor substitute. It is given to very young [758] infants and to persons with intestinal ailments, and so [576] constitutes a symbol for weakness. (It is a major insult to call a man "alecha", because the term also means "impotent".)

Most often alecha is boiled with chicken, "yädoro alecha". Red onion is preferred in butter, in a clay pot ("dest"). Peeled vegetables such as tomatoes (in urban areas) and water are added. The chicken, disjointed, washed and dried, is boiled in this. Powdered ginger, cloves, green pepper without seeds, sweet basil are added,

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262 the last a few minutes before the wot is ready. Some add capsicum at the same time.

Liver and stomach, especially of sheep and goat, are eaten, but spleen and milt are considered hard to digest and are given to dogs. In general, interior organs are not prestigeful.

Raw beef, "brundo", is still featured at special feasts such as weddings, religious feasts like "täzkär",
[164] as it was featured at feasts of warriors in the past. This brings much tapeworm infection, but the risk is taken because it is believed that "brundo" makes strong like no
[755] other food. The painful purgative cure is undergone every two months with "kosso", still a major institution among the Amhara.

To cool the palate linings and tongue from the bärbäre, curdled milk, "ergo", is consumed right afterwards.
[515] Hands are carefully washed, for touching the eyes with fingers stained from the spiced stew makes them smart.

Fish, much eaten only in the rainy season, is also boiled in wot, often after slight prefrying in talba (linseed oil); lentils (mesr) are often added.

Lentils become very important in the long lenten sea-
[784] son and on every Wednesday and Friday, when the average Amhara still abstains from meat, milk, eggs and other animal products, for religious (Coptic fast) reasons. The staple food during these periods is a porridge called "shero": mashed peas seasoned with spices, onion and vegetable oil.

Another vegetarian staple is "nefro", consisting of peas, chick peas, sorghum, all boiled and eaten as ker-

252 nels, or crushed and baked into a cake with nug or linseed
262 oil. The porridge of non-fast times is called "genfo". It is made of crushed wheat, barley, butter and curdled milk. In fast times nug and linseed are substituted for the forbidden butter and milk. A fast drink consists of [272] tyeff flour boiled in salt water, called "hu".

Other religious food taboos include the pig, which is never raised, except for European's use. This taboo dates back to Judaism and the Old Testament.

Every householder usually has a supply of roasted kernals "qolo" available in case unexpected guests or kin come to visit, a frequent occurrence. The pattern of "qolo" is very similar to that of a linguistically equivalent concept in Yemen. The Amhara makes it mostly of barley, "gebs qolo", but also of shembera and of maize.

[263] Condiments taken along on trips include an oily paste made of nug or linseed. When this is also spiced, salted, or mixed with honey, it is called "chelqa". It [272] resembles a gummy porridge. The traveller can mix it with water and instantly have a drink which is regarded not only as thirst-quenching, but also as strength-giving. However, no one claims that the taste is good.

264 There are two major meals per day: midday lunch, a light meal, though it may feature both "enjära" and "wot"; and the heavier supper, "erät", the main meal consumed in the cool of the early evening around the hearth of the hut, with bread, meat stew, barley beer and condiments. Breakfast as such is not eaten, except for a handful of roasted barley, and, if the household can afford it, black coffee.

792 council of elder monks

If a nunnery is attached to the monastery (e.g by common ownership of land), they are separated by riverbeds, steep hill, etc., and have their own pasturage meadows, and their own chapels.

262 792 465 The staple foods are beans and peas, consumed in large quantities, usually boiled as "nefro" (the staple hot dish of fasting periods), and a specially thick, nutritious bread, "daboye". The latter is at least 1-½ feet in diameter, at least half an inch thick. It is cut into quarters, and each monk receives a specified number of quarters according to his monastic rank. Thus, older, high-level monks who need less food have much surplus with which to engage the services of church students, or even trade with peasants for occasional chickens, honey, spices, etc. The range is from a mere one-quarter for the lowliest monk to 12 quarters for the head of the monastery, plus proportional distribution of "nefro".

Barley-beer is also similarly rationed out, on permitted occasions. Cotton cloth (abujedid) and shamma or natala togas are distributed once a year, preferably in time for the masqal holyday.

792 The chanting of prayers and poetry permeates the atmosphere, from 3 A.M. when the monk supervisor of the day enters the kitchen, humming the pre-dawn chants, to long after nightfall when students still practice for exams.

796 After dawn, the priests are again ready, awaiting only the arrival of the bishop, the governor and other officials, before resuming the services which this time include the re-baptism of the populace. Lighted candles are set afloat on the pond, and the bishop, after reciting blessings over the water and the future light and heavy rains, dips the cross in the water and sprinkles it over the governor and other "great men"; then lesser priests take over until every man is sprinkled. Very pious and rustic peasants jump into the water, younger boys strip and swim in the pond usually filled for this occasion. Amidst further chants and dancing, the procession slowly winds its way back, stopping at crossroads to take leave of the various "tabot" returning to their own churches. Only the "tabot" of "Mikael" remains at the water, for the following day belongs to that archangel.

The same ceremony as in villages, is followed in the capital. In national sports, the "gänna" season (hockey) ends that day, and the "guks" season of horsemanship and lance-throwing in mock pursuit, begins. The latter name is therefore closely connected with Temqät.

● [262] Among the many minor feasts and fasts that follow, another Old Testament survival stands out. It stands out as a 3-day fast--no animal products, and no food before noon), from the 8th to the 10th of Yäkatit, called "tsomä Nänäwe", reminiscent of the Fast of Nineveh mentioned in the Bible. It is observed only by church students and clergy, but is more widely known than "gezrat".

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262 As soon as this is over, a period of intensive meat-eating begins, similar to European carne-vale (carnival), for the same reason: the long lenten period is approaching, and in Abyssinia this means also abstention from eggs, cheese, milk, and other animal products (some even avoid fish), just as on any Wednesday and Friday; and no food before noon, for the strictly observant. The fast is obeyed by nearly everyone, in all classes. This fast begins on the 22nd day of Yäkatit, and is called "kudade" (lit. suffering) to indicate both the suffering of Jesus and of the faster. It is also referred to as "arba tom"(lit. 40-fast) though in fact the fast lasts 55 days. Women prepare a variety of vegetable and grain dishes, to substitute for the absence of more solid food.

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[71] Finally, on the 17th day of the month of Miyazya, the long-awaited Easter, "Fassika" (related to the Hebrew Passover, "Passah" etymologically), occurs.

It is the climax of a week of preparations during which the lenten "hudadey" sharpens. This week is called "hemamat" (passion, extreme suffering), and no work is done, symbolizing the sympathy withthe weakness and suffering of Jesus. Even the Saturday market is cancelled--the only time this happens.

[443] Purchasers of meat and supplies for Easter must do their shopping on Thursday, when a special big market is held. The price of sheep, etc., goes up sharply, even doubles, in anticipation of the feast. Even tyeff and pepper (bärbäre) become more expensive. Ethnic craftsmen take this opportunity to bring their products,

796 selling plowpoints for the plowing that will soon begin when the light rains have softened the ground.

[262] On this Thursday, the pious begin a 3-day fast, taking only dry peas and water after the noon hour. Good Friday, called "seqlät", is on the 15th of Miyazya. Chil-
796 857 dren, too young to fast, are given special privileges of impertinence that day. (For are not all rules suspended now that the Savior himself is dying?). From sunrise on, boys and girls knock at doors of huts and houses, chanting:

[539] "Musha-musho, (nonsense rhyme, meaning lamentation, funeral chant)
we come for your crucifixion (Oh Christ);
Fill (our hands) with flour (ye women),
we are many as fleas".
Musho-musha,
May He (God) give ye fat cattle,
children in your womb;
give us gifts!"

They are given freshly-baked bread being prepared for the Easter feast, but they keep on demanding, making the most of this rare freedom, insulting and mocking the stingy hosts. They may carry an effigy corpse of the latter, as if to his funeral, weeping and lamenting his "lekso" (funeral eulogy). Some boys dress as priests, the girls imitating hysterical women relatives, until they bury him with full ceremonials on the market place, to the great amusement of the adult audience.

776 Adults on this Friday rise early for morning wor-

796 ship, perform the "segdat" (prostration) many times. This signifies the climax of lenten suffering. Toward evening, when Christ is presumed to have died on the cross, the pious are of good cheer, for He has descended to purgatory, has tied the devil hand and foot, and has liberated all the souls to paradise.

796 At earliest dawn Saturday morning, about 5:30,
793 priests and deacons put on their best garments, including "kapa" (cape) and "lämd", carry their colorful sun umbrellas as if in procession, and pass through the streets with parade cross, bell, incense burners, and armsful of yellow-green palm strips called "qetäma". They stop before every house or hut, ringing the bell. The sleepy owner answering the call is given the reed to wind flat around his forehead, and he will wear it all day. The priest sings out: "Oh, master, Jesus Christ has been found! The devil is chained!". In appreciation of the good news, the head of the house gives the priest some money, and receives a blessing in return. This ceremonial interchange is called "Gebra salam" (serving the greeting).

796 Sometime before midnight, the church services begin, with alternately mournful and hopeful liturgy. When the night is about to end, at cockcrow Sunday morning (about 4 A.M.) the resurrection, ("tensaē") is loudly declared amidst shouting and ringing of bells.
[26] The pious now break fast with crushed linseed ("talba") mixed with honey, and pronounce the blessing of having been permitted to reach this day. All rush out of the

796 smoky, incense-filled church, to reach home and begin the feasting on meat. Sheep are rapidly slaughtered all over the area, fires are lit, pepper stew is boiling everywhere, and the vast jars of barley beer, injära, coffee, and milk and butter are consumed. This feasting, often ruinous to the digestion, continues for some time, for the Wednesday and Friday fasts are abrogated for the next 50 days.

With regained strength, fired by good food and [526] beer, the young men begin games of javelin throwing. Ball games ("qenchebt") continue the entire following week, when the heavy feasting still keeps work to a minimum.

The last outdoor picnic before the rains takes place occurs on the 1st day of the month of "Genbot", when the "Ledäta" (birthday) of the Virgin Mary is celebrated. The leafy outdoor shelter, "dass", is erected for this occasion. Both women and men take part, though [789] in separate groups. At the end of the day, some women "clean house" of evil spirits, to keep them away while shut in during the rainy season. This is done by casting boiled "nefro" porridge into the bush, telling the personified sickness to go after it.

[262] During the next church holydays, fish, particularly the "senro", become staples of the menu of priests and others, since rivers begin to fill with water and fish are more plentiful. There is a church festival "räbbä kahnat" (lit. inventory of the priests), a purely internal affair,

574 visitors screw up their faces as if in great agony, even despair, and
576 utter the long, subdued wail "ayye". Religious expressions on such occasions are "ergiabher yatnawo" (May God give you health), or "egzer yemarewo" (May God be merciful to you).

574 d) Hospitality and Dining.
539 Hospitality to kinfolk, members of the secondary group, and other travellers, in that sequence of emphasis, is a major culture focus. Numerous proverbs are often quoted, governing this behavior:

Even a poor man is expected to give what he can, even if he can offer little more than a pleasant face:

"More than his food,
his face pleased me."

Refusal of hospitality for the night is castigated:

"He has let me be eaten by the hyena" (at night).

A stingy host, who could well afford generosity, is mocked:

"He goes about, attended by 90 retainers;
but in his house famine reigns".

A host is advised to make his invitation specific as to the day:

"A dog, called for the right day,
arrives on his own feet".

574 A host is expected to urge the guest to take freely of profferred
262 good and drink. An invitation to "take coffee" is frequently the formula introducing a complete dinner. Staples readily available, unlike dinners that require preparation, include barley beer ("tilla"), roasted barley grains ("gebs golo"), roasted peas ("shembera golo"), boiled corn grains ("mashella"), milk, eggs, limp bread ("enjara"), and except among the very poor, coffee beans, which are roasted, crushed and boiled in front of the guest.

Dinner is regarded as a feast ("degges" or "gebber") and should include meat and butter, so that it is impolite to invite anyone on

574 Wednesday or Friday when no animal products can be consumed; the months
262 of lent also interrupt the frequency of visiting.

To honor a "great man" ("telleq säw") the host presents him with a live sheep, select, with a heavy tail, then has it slaughtered and cooked in a spicy and peppery sauce ("wot"). In place of barley beer he will offer honeywater ("bərz") or even honeymead ("täj"); the bread will be served smeared with spiced butter. A poor man, forced to substitute chicken for sheep, can at least indicate that he honors the guest by giving him the choice morsel - the wing: The proverb says:

[539]

"The chicken wing

joy brings to the face".

264 Etiquette in eating follows these procedures: The hands are washed prior to consuming bread or meat (though often with not very clean, muddy river water poured from a clay pot); and washed again after the meal to remove pepper stains of the "bärbäre wot" from the fingers, lest absentminded rubbing of the eye cause painful stinging. Only the right hand is used in eating, for the left is used in the toilet. The right hand is used to rip off a piece of the limp "enjära", dip it into the meat stew, close the piece of pancake-like bread around some morsel and fish it out for immediate consumption. A knife is used only when eating "brundo" (raw beef), at a special feast, to cut off a piece held between the teeth (now, at city feasts, brundo is served pre-sliced into cubes).

Noisy eating ("gorädämä") is permitted in the old tradition as indicative of he-man behavior, but smacking of lips and ceremonial belching, though not criticized, are not emphasized. It is an old custom of Amhara hosts, still followed in rural areas, to pour a mouthful of a prefferred drink into their own cupped hands and consume it, before passing the cup to the honored guest or "great man" ("ejun däqno tätta"- lit. he received (cup) with hands (under chin) and drank). This

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women cower on all fours, snarl at each other, snort like angry leopards, showing their teeth. They crouch like wildcats about to spring at each other, their faces turned to the ground, and eying each other only intermittently. A shallow, large clay dish filled with barley beer is set on the floor for them, and the two antagonists compete with each other in lapping up the drink like cats.

One of the women is possessed by an evil female zar, the other by a mean male zar. The male zar snaps at the female zar, who is of equal power and status. Appearing stimulated by the drink, they chase each other about the room, still cowering, snorting, attacking, retreating, finally grasping each other in a battle clinch, and actually nipping at each other. When this happens, the Lady Salamtu rises quickly, and descends into the arena wielding a thick leather strap. The contestants roll on and off one another and begin to bite seriously, but before damage is done, Lady Sälämtu swishes her strap, pulls them apart or separates them with light blows.

This battle is accompanied with drumbeat and rythmic handclapping by the crowd. The contestants do not rejoin battle but roam very rapidly as if blind and lost, sniffing the ground as if they depended on the sense of smell, until they fall exhausted in a heap. But a few moments later they run to Lady Sälämtew, kiss her hand, and prostrate themselves before her on the dirt floor in front of the platform. Thus the female and minor zars pay homage to the powerful male zars that possess Lady Salamtew, and acknowledge that they have learned to keep within bounds and not do very severe damage.

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It is now 11:30 P.M. and a brief recess is announced. A young, part-Sudanese servant woman, and ex-slave, serves coffee, barley beer,

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araqi, and also round, solid wheat discs (Citta")- the unleavened bread of travelers, expensive when made of wheat.

About midight, the convention proceeds, with the poet intoning the call for the female zar "Shazqit (see table for her characteristics):

Poet: "Dance, round and round, brave one;

Shanqit, we are calling; brave one".

Both men and women clap more fiercely than over, in quick rythm Suddenly the servant woman who had served the latest refreshments stiffens with a jerk, screams, and lets the tray slide from her hand. She is about to be possessed by the female zar of her class and occupation. This "gurri" is infantile in character. The young woman begins to skip about the room like a young goat or an overly gay little girl. She teasingly pokes at the men, again and again, until a few copper coins are given her. When this happens, she jumps high with glee. But a moment later she is back, pouting, demanding some sweets, asking for honey. Given some, she devours it, and dances a victory dance, flipping about on tiptoe. The drumbeat quickens. Finally she falls exhausted, her zar now in full possession of her.

There is another hush, awaiting further demonstrations. But there is an unscheduled interlude which reinforces discipline. The woman who had danced the "pagan" gurri had left shortly afterward, ostensibly for a call of nature, but had not returned until now, far too long an absence without permission. Seeing her enter, Lady Salamtew rises, shouting angrily, walkes toward her and beats her on the upper back with the heavy strap, several times, rather hard. The victim stands with bowed head, not stirring under the punishment, evidently

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

144 of Semitic blood. There is rather more of the Semite in the Tigraian and the Amhara than in the Shoan and the Gojjami. The Tigraian language has come [197] much under Semitic influences, and there are many common elements in Amharic and Arabic: not only in vocabulary but also in syntax. The Amharic 20 alphabet, with over two hundred and fifty odd letters, is a very exact instrument for rendering the language. It is derived from one of the old Semitic alphabets of the Middle East. Amharic has many explosive sounds which [194] often give the impression that the speaker is excited and indignant when he is not, and with the impatient foreigner this can sometimes lead to misunderstandings.

142 Physically the Amhara is slight and light-boned with regular rather [516] delicate features. He has quick almost bird-like movements and his manner gives the impression which I cannot describe better than by the word [145] fluttering. The hair and beard has the characteristic Hamitic corrugation. Men often go iron grey in middle life, but seldom white. The hair of the [302] women is artificially frizzed and dressed with butter-grease to fix it. This gives them a gollywog appearance.

157 The Amhara have the most charming manners and they like to stand on 576 ceremony. They have a complicated social hierarchy and always diamount as a salutation to superior persons. They will also touch with their lips the 644 hands or knees of superiors. At the same time they have the naturally easy and democratic outlook of the East; and the poorest man will expect attention and the right of access to a Ras, or even to the Emperor. The approaches to the palace at Addis Ababa were lined with sometimes quite humble people, farmers and soldiers, waiting an opportunity to secure the Emperor's decision on some matter.

157 To respond to his ceremonial manners is an easy way to the heart of the 576 Ethiopian. At the same time they are quick to take offence and their shrill voices are soon raised in anger.

147 The frail physique and mercurial temperament of the Amhara is doubtless [262] the result of the rarefied alpine atmosphere and of a diet predominantly of grain paste seasoned with strong condiments—which they vary from time to time with orgies on practically raw meat. But fragile as they look, the Amhara are, nevertheless, extremely hardy. They will sleep out in all weathers with nothing to cover them but their thin cotton robes; they are remarkable runners and can maintain a jog trot all day; they are like goats on the hillside.

153 I believe the Amhara to be naturally intelligent with a brain which only awaits proper training and development. During the five years of the [191] Italian occupation, no small proportion of the population of Addis Ababa acquired a fair knowledge of Italian. I knew a boy of twenty who, in addition to excellent English, was proficient in Arabic, Somali, Galla, and Swahili. He came, of course, from Harar, which is a great metropolis for peoples from all round the Red Sea. Abyssinian recruits acquired a knowledge of Morse with remarkable facility.

157 When it is possible to overcome the linguistic difficulty and get on friendly terms with Ethiopians, they prove delightful companions, naturally kind, generous and friendly, with a charming sense of humour and often a nice

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

346 is painted, it is not certain whether it is stone or wood. It has two sets of cloisters round the body of the church, both 346 covered in, and much painted with figures of apostles, 532 patriarchs, prophets, and many things of the Old Law, and 353 many angels, and St. George on horseback, who is in all the churches. This monastery also possesses a great cloth, like a piece of tapestry, on which is the crucifix and effigy of Our Lady and the apostles, and other figures of patriarchs and prophets, and each one has his Latin name written, so that no man of the country made it. It has many small and ancient pictures, not well made, and they are not upon the altars, for it is not their custom: they keep them in a [212] sacristy, mixed up with many books, and they bring them out on feast days. There is in this monastery a very large kitchen and bakehouse, also a very large refectory, in which 792 they eat. They mostly eat three and three[1] in a large dish, ●262 it is not deep, but flat like a tray, and their food is very [264] poor. The bread is of maize and barley, and other grain which they call *taffo*,[2] a small black grain. They make this bread round, and of the size and roundness of a citron,[3] and they give three of these to each friar: to the novices they give three loaves to two of them, it is a matter of amazement how they can maintain themselves. They also give them a few vegetables, without salt or oil. Of this food they send to a great many old pensioners, who do not come to the refectory. Besides seeing these things when we 792 buried Matthews, I saw them many times, because I came there to pass time with the friars, principally on feast days, when we were near there. In this way I learned about them and their property, and revenues and customs. In my opinion there were generally always a hundred friars in this

[1] By threes.

[2] Mansfield Parkins calls it teff, the species of corn most esteemed in this country.

[3] Zamboa, not referred to in Selves' translation.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

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574 middle upwards hairy like lions. We passed the mountain, and went to sleep at the foot of a village called Zalote. There will be about four or five leagues from this place to the monastery from which we set out. We halted by a running river of very good water, and when our baggage had been unloaded we went to the said village to see a very honourable gentleman, the headman of it—a very old man, who was lodged here very honourably. He gave us a very
[242] hospitable reception, giving us many fowls cooked in butter, and much mead, and he sent us a very large fat cow to the place of our halt. On the following day, which was Sunday, we went to say our mass at the church of the village, which is called St. Michael, a poor church, both the fabric and the ornaments. There are in this church three
793 married priests and three others, deacons,[1] that is to say, of
796 the gospel, and all are necessary, for no less can say mass. This honourable captain I met with later as a friar in the monastery of Bisan, and he left his condition and revenues to his sons, who were honourable persons; and I saw him stand at the gate outside, and he did not enter within the monastery, and there he received the communion with the novices, and when the offices of the church were ended he remained in honour with the provincial. On this Sunday we set out again in the afternoon, because the country
133 people who conducted us wished it so. Here we began to travel through flat country fallows and tillage, in the fashion of Portugal, and the bushes which are between the tilled lands are all wild olives, without other trees. We slept by some running streams, between many good villages.

[1] *Zagoniaes.* Ethiopian corruption of *diakonos.*

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

CAP. XIX.—*How they gave us to eat in the house of the Barnagais, and how in this country the journeys are not reckoned by leagues.* 648

When we were out of the house where the Barnagais was, they made us sit down in the receiving room of another house on mats on the ground, and they brought here a large trencher of barley meal, but little kneaded, and a horn of mead. And, since we had not seen such food, we would not eat it; but when we were more accustomed to the country we ate it readily. Without eating of this, we arose and came to our resting-place and then set out. This might be at two hours before midday. Having gone on our road half a league or more there came to us a man running and telling us to wait; that the mother of the Barnagais was sending us food, and took it as a misfortune our coming away without eating and not accepting the food they gave us, which was that customary in the country. We waited, and the food came to us, that is to say, five large rolls of wheat bread and a horn of mead. Let not anyone be amazed who hears of a horn of wine, because for the great lords and Prester John cows' horns are their cups for wine, and there are horns holding five or six canadas.[1] Besides this, the mother of the Barnagais sent us some of the same kneaded flour, and now we ate some of it. This meal is of parched barley, made into flour, and they mix it up with very little water, and so eat it. After this banquet we made our way to the town of Barua, where our goods and companions had remained. In this country, and in all the kingdoms of Prester John, there are no leagues, and if you ask how far it is from this place to such a place, they say: If you depart in the morning at sunrise, you will arrive when the sun is in such a place; and if you travel slowly you will arrive there when they shut up the cows, that is at 804

[264] [262] [415] [262]

[1] A Portuguese measure equal to about three pints.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

of Braga, put to Francisco Alvaréz, chaplain of the king our sovereign, respecting some particulars of the country of Prester John, beyond those which the said Francisco Alvarez has written in his book; the said Francisco Alvarez having gone to the said Prester in the company of Don Rodrigo de Lima, who went as ambassador to the said Prester, on account of the death of Duarte Galvam, who was sent there by the King Don Manuel, may he be in holy glory; which persons reached the port of Masua, an island in the Red Sea, close to the town of Arquico, country of the Prester, on the 27th day of April 1520, and they passed six[1] years in the said country and lordships of the Prester, and they returned to embark at the said port of Masua, close to Arquico, in the year 1526 on the 28th day of April; and the said Francisco Alvarez came to this city of Braga to be confirmed in the benefice which the King our sovereign gave him. He remained in it some days, and the said Francisco Alvarez reached this city of Braga on the 30th July, of the year 1529.

He said that usually the people do not eat only once a day, and this at night, and that the monks and clergy fast strictly during Lent, so that many only eat three times in the week, namely, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, that they do not drink wine of grapes nor of honey, and that they drink other beverages which are made of other vegetables.

In Lent they eat neither meat not milk, nor eggs nor butter, even though they are near dying, they eat vegetables and some few fruits which are in the country. All the men and women, great and small, fast all the Wednesdays and Fridays in the year; this is not to be understood from Christmas to the Purification of Our Lady, nor from Easter to Trinity, when there is no fast. Friars, priests, gentlemen and noblemen, fast all the week excepting Saturday and Sunday.

[1] Should be seven years.

[1] [the author, i.e., Alvarez]

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

He said that no men died at the hands of justice, that they flogged many, and put out the eyes of some, and of others they cut off a foot or a hand, according to the quality the crime; but that he had seen a man burned because he was found to have committed two robberies in a church.

That the Pope or Patriarch of the country of Prester John is called Abima, which means father, and that there is nobody else in all the kingdoms and lordships of the Prester who confers orders except him.

The Prester John is called Acegue,[1] which means emperor, and he is called Neguz, which means king.

There is no manner of physic, only they apply fire; in some sickness they use cupping without fire, and for headaches, they bleed on the head with a knife placed on the vein, and they strike it with a stick so that it should draw blood, and also they take some herbs as a beverage to cure themselves.

In all the country there is no town which exceeds one thousand six hundred inhabitants, and of these there are few, and there are no walled towns or castles, but villages without number. The houses generally, or most of them, are round, and all of one story, covered with terraces or thatch, and courtyards round them. People generally sleep on ox-hides, others on beds made of straps of the same hides; no kind of table. They eat in flat trenchers, like trays of great width, without napkins or tablecloths. They have basins of very black earthenware like jet, and pipkins of the same clay for drinking water and wine. Many eat raw meat, and others eat it roasted on the ashes, others roasted over woodfire, and others over cowdung where there is no wood. There is much wax there, and tapers and candles; they do not make candles of tallow. There is no oil there except a kind which they call *hena*, and which is made from some herbs like Mayweed;[2] it has no taste, and is beautiful as gold. There

[1] *Alegue*, an Emperor.

[2] *Pampilhos*, also called *olho de boy*.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

136 is no fish there except very little from the rivers; from the There sea none.

795 There are no monasteries except of St. Anthony, and
792 not of any other order, as some friars say who come from there.

291 The gentlemen, monks, canons, and priests are clothed; most of the other people are bare from the waist upwards, and a sheepskin on the shoulders, with the front and hind feet tied together.

792 Most of the monasteries are situated on high mountains,
346 or in great ravines; they have large revenues and juris-
[262] diction. In many monasteries they do not eat meat all the year, and fish very few times, as they have not go it in the country. The services of these monasteries are psalms and prose, and so it is done in the churches of the canons.

796 Every church has two curtains, one on this side of the altar with little bells, and no one but priests enter inside this curtain; and another curtain in the middle of the church. And no one but persons in orders enter the church, and many gentlemen and honourable persons are ordained in order to enter the church. They go to the door of all the churches and monasteries to read the epistles and gospels, and they say them rapidly, and there they give the communion to the people.

The priests consecrate at the altar, and do not show the sacrament. When the priest who says mass comes to take the communion, he takes a particle from the top, and the other two large parts he leaves for the communion of the people. All the people who come to the church have to receive the communion every day, or else not come to church. When the communion is ended, they give them a little blessed water with which they wash their mouths.

Nobody sits down in the church, nor do they enter it shod; they do not hem or spit, nor do they let any dog or other animal come into the church. They confess standing,

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

ning of a reign; which she could not do, until one of the nobles supplied her with a sum of money. There were only a few derims left in the treasury. 792

Abyssinian Harvests. They first sow barley from the end of April to the beginning of May, or later; that is, towards the first rains. This ripens in the rains in June; and is carried off the fields into the house, that it may not rot. Then they sow fitches, which likewise ripen in the rains after. In September they sow wheat, or teff, which is cut down in December; and, if they have water, they sow barley, or fitches, again in January. In Woggora (a very fertile province), there is seed-time, and harvest, and plowing, in every month in the year; water being easily diverted to the grounds. The rent paid to the king for the ground is one-tenth of what they reap, yet, with all this, they are all poor; for a harvest, at a medium, is about twenty after one; and they sometimes, nay, very often, scarce reap the seed. They never manure the ground; and there are great quantities of rats, and innumerable ants, that consume their corn at different, nay, at all periods of its growth. All their five harvests do not, in produce, equal one Egyptian one; and they are at five times the labour. In the several villages, living, in general, is very miserable; and, in general, people of consideration scarcely know any other diet than teff bread and bouza. Whether this teff is black, or white, is the whole difference between the diet of master and servant. 241 [511] [262]

Abyssinian Dress. The principal part of the dress of the natives is a large cotton cloth, 24 peek (cubits) in length, and one and a half in breadth, with a blue and yellow stripe round the bottom of it. This blue is not dyed; but the Surat blue cloths are unravelled and woven for this purpose; and the yellow they dye with sûf, the yellow thistle. The best for ordinary wear costs 10 salts, or 1¼ pataka, about 6s. 6d. English. It is called Kuara, as probably coming from that province. They are very beautiful and light. The other pieces of dress are breeches, which reach to their mid-thighs; and girt with a white girdle of cloth to the common people; but the better sort have red Indian cotton cloths for breeches; and silk, or worsted coloured girdles from the Levant. When they ride, they only hold their stirrups between their great and 291 [435] 492

[p. 45]

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948
MP5 Amhara MP5

'foreigners', and even though, within the group ownership, there was individual and family ownership of the land.

The allocation of and the succession to the land was governed by ancient custom. This custom varied greatly because, as d'Abbadie said, 'In Ethiopia one of the despairs of the traveller, who thinks he knows the country, is to discover, sometimes by chance, that such and such a community, comprising a family, a part of a village, or district is of a different origin from the population which surrounds it.' In internal land and family matters, it would keep its own private law.[1] In some communities there were meetings at fixed intervals of three to seven years according to the region and at which the reallocation between families of the different types of land, which was in several categories according to its fertility, was arranged. Apart from these adjustments by agreement, land went from father to son. Land transactions were announced by the public crier and registered, generally by entry in a Bible or other book, in the 'parish' church. The penal code of 1930 decreed up to three years' imprisonment for failure to register transactions in hereditary land,[2] but this decree may not have been fully effective in the provinces by 1935. Transactions were always carried out before witnesses. These sometimes included young children who might be given a feast of the delicacy of fried grain in order to fix the event in their memories.

Landmatters, indeed, were settled within such land-holding groups with little intervention from higher authority so long as all its members gave what was due to the government or to the representative of the government. Their relations with this representative would be through their family and the heads of their family group and it is obvious that a community with this degree of autonomy in the vital matters of land and tribute, in addition to the minor legislative and judicial powers already described,[3] might be regarded as largely self-governing in local matters. Such *restenya*, or hereditary land-holders, were further fortified in their position by the recognition of private property in the *Fetha Nagast*. In Menelik's later days, his council confirmed this position by a decree in which it was promised that except in cases of rebellion and treason even criminals should not be dispossessed from such tenure.[4] This provision was repeated in clause 9 of the penal code of 1930. It is probable that it was unbroken settlement by an Amhara tribal community which alone could offer effective resistance to royal and other pressure.

The Emperor would, however, seize every opportunity of breaking

[1] d'Abbadie, *op. cit.*, p. 90. [2] Clause 458. [3] See above, p. 142.
[4] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, p. 611.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

The Abyssinian calendar for *their* current year (leap year for them) accordingly compares with ours as shewn on the previous page; and in the last month given, the calendar resumes its normal correspondence with ours as, owing to the occurrence of our leap year, February has an extra day in 1936.

Apart from their language, there are many customs and practices amongst the Abyssinians which differentiate them sharply from most of the other peoples of Africa, and not the least interesting of these are clearly traceable to their ancient connection with Israel, of which they speak with pride in their old records.

For example, much of their religious pageantry, which is described in detail elsewhere, is undoubtedly a remarkable survival of rites which must have been introduced by the earliest Jewish arrivals, such as the Dance of the Priests, their ceremonies connected with the Tabot, and many others. Similarly, their method of slaughtering cattle for food, the division of animals into clean and unclean, etc., are all indications pointing in the same direction.

Their dislike of Jews to-day is accordingly the more remarkable, and must be due to the sanguinary wars which took place from the fourth to the tenth centuries between the newly-converted Christians and those who remained Jews.

Among other customs which are peculiar and interesting, pride of place must surely be given to their fondness for raw meat or *broundo*. This form of diet is preferred to any other by the mass of the population, and indeed by practically all sections thereof, beef being liked better than mutton.

When we were on trek our men could be given no

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

262 greater treat than an ox, and within an hour of the purchase of the animal it was killed, skinned, cut into joints and divided amongst the tents, and our followers were busy gorging themselves on the still warm flesh. [25] What the twenty men could not eat in the day was 136 never cooked, but was cut into long thin strips and hung on ropes to dry in the sun and wind for the morrow's meal—a tempting bait for the vultures, hawks, and carrion crows that used to collect in their hundreds and make frantic dives for the tempting morsels, occasionally picking up a piece from the line in their claws to the intense disgust of the men. It was fascinating to watch the daring swoops and dips of the circling birds, and so reckless did they become that one day whilst we were at lunch a hawk, baulked of his craving for raw meat by the watchfulness of its guardians, actually swooped down on our luncheon table and snatched from the plate on my wife's knees the wing of a duck that she was about to operate on, brushing her face and knocking her knife out of her hand with his powerful wings; and at the same moment another bird lifted a cutlet from a dish which our "boy" was carrying from the cook's tent to our table. The "boy's" expression of indignation and helplessness was most comical to watch.

262 But to revert to the practice of eating raw meat. Early travellers to Abyssinia have not only commented on this, but have gone even further, and have stated that meat is cut and eaten *from the living animal.* Bruce describes two separate and distinct instances of this practice, which he stated occurred frequently. The first was that of three soldiers whom he saw driving along a cow, and on arriving at a halting-place they tied it,

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

threw it down, cut steaks from it which they devoured rapidly, and then drove the cow on again, plastering up the wound with mud. The second (which is given with a wealth of detail too revolting to repeat) was at a regular banquet at which a live cow was brought in and strips cut from it by all the guests until the animal died, which took some time.

Salt states that Pearce actually saw an example of the first instance quoted above, which he says is by no means uncommon, but he disbelieves the second instance. No other writer that I am acquainted with recounts any such instance *of his own knowledge*, and the suggestion that such a practice ever existed is hotly denied in the country. Nor could I find any evidence of the existence of such a habit either as to the present or the past. Personally I am inclined to disbelieve the stories or to regard them as gross exaggerations, or possibly as isolated instances.

Be that as it may, the raw meat dietary, however, is undoubtedly very popular to-day, and it may be of interest if I give an extract from my diary describing a great *Gebur*, or banquet given at the Feast of Maskal, which we attended, and at which no fewer than 15,000 soldiers and 2000 or 3000 palace retainers were fed in four relays in the great hall. This is the more interesting in that for some years past Europeans have not been admitted to the *Gebur*, and although one was held on our last visit we were not present.

The *Gebur*

"We were received by the Court Chamberlain on the large stone terrace outside the *aderatch*, and after a

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

784 Christians will not touch meat unless it is killed by
795 one of themselves, nor will Moslems eat any which has been killed by a Christian. We had one Moslem with us when we were on trek, and as he would not eat the ox which my other men had killed he bought a whole sheep for himself, and killed and ate it himself; none of the other men would touch an atom of it, even when their own supply ran out and they had no meat at all.

262 Of course the comparatively high price of meat (for
252 an Abyssinian) prevents the too frequent consumption of *broundo* amongst the people, and their tastes in everyday food are simple. Bread is their mainstay. This is found in many varieties; some of it soft, slightly sour in taste, and pale brown in colour; the most popular is of flour made from *teff* or millet seed, mixed to a thick paste with water and then poured into a large rough slightly concave iron receptacle and cooked over an open fire, without grease or fat of any kind. When finished this bread takes the form and aspect of large pancakes, twelve to eighteen inches in diameter, and is very good, especially when eaten with jam or butter; we always ate it ourselves when on trek. The native eats with it a kind of mash of lentils or dried peas, ground and cooked, and mixed with butter and a very hot red sauce which is produced from the chilli; this latter is very widely cultivated in several varieties all over the country.

263 The amount of pepper that is put into their cooked dishes is as a rule disastrous to the European palate at the first time of trying, and how they can swallow the fiery compounds that they do passes my comprehension —their tongues and palates must be made of leather.

261 All food, including meat, is eaten with the fingers amongst all classes, a piece of bread being broken off,

164 Aubert-Roche (1845-46) also describes smallpox as an important disease and Courbon (1861) states that few Abyssinians are seen without smallpox scars.

The Italians undertook large scale vaccination and smallpox began to disappear. In 1937, 200,000 vaccinations were given in and around Addis Ababa as a small epidemic had occurred among the people living near the aerodrome. (In 1944, I saw a small outbreak at Sire, near Lekemti.)

Smallpox vaccine is being prepared in Addis Ababa, but until an adequate health service can be established this disease will continue to be a menace both to the Ethiopians and their surroundings.

Helminthic Diseases

The classical disease of Ethiopia is infection by the tapeworm *Taenia saginata*. All the old travelers have detailed descriptions of the eating of raw meat (*brindo*) and the ensuing tape-worm infection. Courbon's (1861) statement is a typical example:

> "Men and women, all and sundry, in this country, have the entozoon; and they take some *kouzzo* regularly every two months to prevent the more serious derangements, which it might cause."

Detailed descriptions of the special Ethiopian anti-helminthic, the so-called *kousso*, have been given in every book on Ethiopia, up to the latest. The professional medical writers have shown the same picture of the omnipresent tapeworm. I had long been skeptical about the frequency of tapeworm. Very little meat, raw or prepared, is eaten by the average Ethiopian, for the simple reason that he cannot afford it. The older travelers were describing special festivals in connection with arrival at distant places. At such occasions meat would be eaten. In a survey of three Ethiopian villages the U. S. Technical Project found tapeworm to be a comparatively rare disease, *Ascaris lumbricoides* being by far the most common helminthic parasite. Conditions are in most places favorable for the embryonation of the ova. The soil is heav-

● [262]

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[MANZ]

29 / *The Legacy of Manz and Gondar*

The history and customs of Manz are more obviously related to its geography than is the case with Gondar. The encircling wall of mountains has been a source of isolation and protection, two factors of great moment in the history of the area. Peculiar eating and clothing habits have developed in response to a climate which, owing to the altitude of Manz and its position at the edge of an escarpment that leads down to a desert of the Rift Valley, is one of the coldest in Ethiopia. The temperature often approaches the freezing point, and in the colder months (October and November) standing in the sunshine at high noon is no defense against a shrill wind that pierces the bones.

Barley is the only crop that thrives in the highest parts of Manz, though wheat, beans, peas, and chick-peas grow in the slightly lower altitudes. But *tēff*, the grain preferred by Abyssinians for the preparation of their staple food —a kind of pancake known as *ǐnjarā*—cannot be cultivated at those heights, so the Manzē typically eats *ǐnjarā* made of barley.

Sheep are a major item in the Manz economy. The average farm has a herd of 100 to 150 sheep, which provide a heavy wool as well as the Manzē's favorite meat. This wool is used to make the *bānnā*, a warm blanket which is wrapped around the body and constitutes the standard dress of the Manzē. The *bānnā* distinguishes him from other Abyssinians, who wear a white cotton toga called *shammā*. Wealthier men wear the *barnos*, a tailored cape made of dark wool. Manzē wool is also used for the weaving of rugs which ornament the homes of the well-to-do.

No dyes are used in working their wool, so a crowd of Manzēs in natural-colored *bānnā* seen at a distance resembles a flock of their sheep. This is one of the touches contributing to the impressive aesthetic unity of the Manz landscape. The effect is also produced by the fact that the Manzē's house is built of stone, the same stone that is seen everywhere on the terrain; and its conical roof is made of thatch, which makes the roof look like the piles of grain in the fields. The churches are also built of stone with thatched conical roofs. Everything one sees in Manz bespeaks a harmony with the natural environment.

The cold climate of Manz is invigorating. It prevents food from spoiling quickly and discourages diseases which flourish in lower altitudes. The Manzē boasts that his climate keeps people healthy and gives them long lives, and indeed it is not uncommon to find men sprightly in their eighties and nineties. But only the hardy survive, for life there is as rugged as the land, and the people—like their landscape—are stony, bleak, and full of dark recesses.

Manz does not occupy so conspicuous a place in Ethiopian history as Gondar. Indeed, most books on Ethiopia do not even mention the area. While

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622 621 794 rounding a local church, and therefore "parish" may be the more appropriate term for it than village. The *chĭqā shum* and the local church authorities work closely on occasion, particularly in connection with the construction and maintenance of church buildings.

*565 79 182 The church represents the third main link between the peasant hamlet and the broader Abyssinian life. As the peasant depends on the local market to mediate between his production unit and the external economy, and on the *chĭqā shum* to mediate between his domestic polity and the higher political authorities, so he depends on the local clergy to mediate between his home culture and the "high culture" of Abyssinia as embodied in the institutions of the Orthodox Church.

The peasant supports the church by following its main ritual requirements and by contributing, according to his means, a certain quantity of grain each year. If the peasant works land owned by the church, a considerable part of his produce is transmitted automatically to individual priests, or gifts are offered to the church according to the occasion. In return, the church symbolizes for him the integrity of his moral order and provides moral support during personal crisis.

*565 Such, in broad outline, is the structural setting of peasant life among the Amhara.

THE WORLD OF ACTIVITY

*565 512 *The Daily Round*

[462 252 Work begins in the peasant's home well before daybreak. His wife or maidservant rises with the first cockcrow to grind grain. It is pitch dark as she feels her way across the earthen floor and begins to push and pull a large flat stone over little heaps of barley, wheat, or *tĕff*.

An hour or two later cold light seeps in through cracks in the door and, if it is in bad repair, the thatched roof. The noises of chickens and livestock become more audible, and the rest of the household begins to stir. The man [782 of the house starts his day by reciting a prayer or, if he has some education, [231 by reading a passage from some sacred text. Then he or one of the boys takes the oxen and cows out for breakfast, to a pile of hay in the yard or a spot of [462 pasture rich with grass. Donkeys, mules, and perhaps horses are also sent to graze.

[372 One of the women pokes the embers that spent the night under a blanket of ash. She blows them into flame through a bamboo pipe, filling the room [262 with smoke and her eyes with tears. Over the fire she sets a clay pot to warm [252 up leftover pepper sauce. The peasant sits on a sheepskin spread over the clay [352 bench that adjoins the wall. Water is poured from a gourd for him to wash [515 his hands, and *ĭnjarā* and sauce are brought for his breakfast. He eats by him- [264 self, slowly, pondering the work for the day.

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the morning and what remains to be done. The peasant may retire for a nap, and perhaps to lie with his wife, before taking up the afternoon's work. He returns for about three more hours of plowing after his noon rest. The afternoon sun burns down on him; the plow is harder to wield; he plods on. At home the women continue their work, no sooner finishing one task than they attend to another. The mother puts the child who rides on her back to the breast whenever it cries.

The shepherds do not come home for lunch. They have taken some *ǐnjarā* or *dābo* ("whole wheat bread") along with them. In harvest months they enjoy a special treat, roasting grains or pulse which they have snatched from somebody's field. Though their responsibility is great—a boy will be whipped if an animal in his charge gets hurt or lost or if it gets into fields of grain—their work is light. They spend the day running idly, practicing war chants, playing at various adult activities. Their mood is as free as the great spaces about them. As the day grows hotter they are likely to discard their sheepskin covering and move about naked. Toward dusk, the shepherds' spirits quicken. Their songs become more excited; lively melodies are heard from their wooden flutes. It is time to go home to family, supper, and fire.

When father and sons enter after the day's work, they start munching on roasted grains, *ǐnjarā*, or *dābo*. They may drink some *ṭallā* and relax. It begins to get chilly. The room is dark and smoky, the fleas bite them—but it is the easiest time of the day. The family is together, and everyone enjoys talking and hearing about the homely events of the day. A few hours after dark, supper is served. Parents and older children eat together out of a common basket. Younger children and servants stand respectfully, awaiting their turn, grateful if someone places a large bite of food in their mouths.

After dinner there is a great washing of feet—the father's by his wife or children, the others' by themselves. The peasant recites or reads his evening prayers and lies down on his bed made of strips of cowhide. The children settle for the night on the clay benches. Last of all, the mother covers the embers with ashes, sets out the grain she must grind before dawn, and places her weary body next to that of her husband's.

This grueling schedule is not repeated every day. On nearly half the days in each month heavy labor is not permitted—men may not plow or harvest, women may not grind or spin. These are holy days: Saturdays and Sundays (both of which are honored as the Sabbath in Abyssinia) and the monthly and annual commemorations of the saints.

The woman's schedule on such days is only lightened, not radically altered. Food and drink must still be prepared and served. Except for a possible trip to church with her husband Sunday morning before breakfast, a woman's hours are still confined to the home compound and its obligations. The shepherds must still take care of their herds, though some boys may get together for

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*565 776 many kinds: they may be male or female, Christian or Muslim, educated or unschooled, mischievous or somber. *Zār* are depicted as resembling the handsome, light-complexioned Abyssinians. They are not necessarily evil: sometimes a person is inspired by the sound of *zār* singing far off in the woods to add a new song to the local lore. But they are the great carriers of physical and mental illness. Many of the contagious diseases in Abyssinia, like typhus and smallpox, are referred to as "*zār* sicknesses." Above all, the *zār* is the bringer of seizures. When a *zār* lands on somebody's back the victim may go into a trance, succumb to melancholia, or break out in hysteria. Women are most often subjected to fits caused by *zār*—usually by male *zār*, who perform some kind of magical coitus with them and try to compete with their husbands. When a freak is born to a woman, it is often attributed to the malicious effect of a *zār* jealous of her husband.

*565 776 [562] Though some kinds of *zār* only desist from molesting their victims through constant propitiations, others can be won over to serve as powerful protecting spirits. Thus an initial discomfort can be turned into a permanent advantage, offering the erstwhile victim magical protection and, as one student has suggested, affording women a temporary escape from their depressed social status through the companionship and opportunities for self-expression found in associations of *zār* "patients."[8]

*565 754 787 Human beings with supernatural powers are of two kinds: those who manipulate the spirits and practice magic, and those who are themselves possessed. The possessed are called *ṭayb* or *budā*. *Ṭayb* (or *ṭabib*) in its original sense means "manual worker," but it has acquired the connotation of "one with the evil eye," the primary meaning of *budā*. By looking at someone the *budā* or *ṭayb* "drinks his blood" through the magic power of his evil eye. The victim will first feel a severe headache and fatigue, then show hysterical frenzy, and finally intestinal cramps. His fingers will be clenched around his thumbs, a sign that the *budā* has grasped the thumbs and does not want anyone to see him taking his "food" from the victim. If the victim is not cured he will eventually waste away and die.

*565 754 [262] [789] [323] [326] [554] The *budā* is helpless to check his malevolent power, and if he enters the home of a friend who is not a *budā* he will shout ahead to get the children out of the way for fear he might unwittingly infect them. People who eat pork are thought invulnerable against the evil eye, the pork in their systems serving as a kind of antibody against the infection. Potters and metalsmiths have been kept in a low caste position in Abyssinia partly because of the belief that such artisans inherit this evil power along with their craft from their parents. It is important in selecting a spouse for one's child to make sure that there is no *budā* blood in the family, and to be called a *budā* or *ṭayb* is one of the more serious insults.

The Amhara peasant has many beliefs about the malevolent beings in his

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*565 461 leisurely style of life of his social superiors. He would prefer, if he could but acquire the necessary servants and corvée labor, to "cause to plow" (*ās-ārasa*) rather than to plow (*ārasa*) himself.

*565 461 181 597 183 [423] If, in sketching the Amhara peasant's conception of the "good life," one moves from the sphere of goals to that of norms and values, one may say that while work as such is not conceived as an absolute value, the work of plowing one's land is regarded as a primary moral responsibility. The peasant's obligations toward his land extend beyond working it, moreover. At the local level he is supposed to keep it within his family, and should be ready to defend his rights to land use against all comers. At the national level he should help to keep the land "free"; that is, out of the hands of all foreigners.

*565 78 181 183 • [262] [301] Obligations toward the deity are mostly of a ritual nature. Observing the fasts and avoiding forbidden foods are perhaps most important of all. It is also important to wear the symbol of the Ethiopian Christian, the *mātab*, a simple neckcord often holding a wrought silver cross. The church should be visited and heavy work avoided on the appropriate holy days. Prayers should not be neglected. When one passes by a church he should bow three times; when he enters a church compound he should "greet" the ark by kissing some stone or pole of the church building.

*565 577 181 183 The Amhara's ideal of Christian piety does, however, include certain good works which should be carried out in order to gain God's favor—giving alms to the indigent, visiting the sick or the prisoner, and aiding the wayfarer (who is referred to as a "guest of God"). But such injunctions play a slight part in

*565 577 673 181 183 the Amhara's rhetoric of social morality when compared to his extensive code of "shames," or *nawr*. Stealing and breaking the fasts are among the very worst *nawr*. Other *nawr* include murder without good reason or by a shameful means like poison; adultery; insulting or not showing proper respect toward others; failing to observe the conventions concerning engagement and marriage; failing to revenge offenses; and gossiping about others and thereby stirring up trouble. Though the sense of being shamed before God provides some measure of internal self-control in these matters, the Amhara peasant avoids immoral acts primarily for fear of being the victim of what others will say (*yelugntā*), so that he will not be "seized by shame" (*hāfrat*) or suffer humiliation (*wardat*). His prime moral concern is not to be caught in the act of committing some *nawr*.

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*565 57 181 183 Positive moral obligations to persons outside the circle of close ones are thus kept to a minimum. Following the conventions of respect toward superiors and peers is all that is enjoined. The good life for the Amhara peasant is lived within a minimal, Hobbesian order. The ideal neighbor is defined as one who does not touch others (*saw aynakām*). He does not touch another's land, wife, money, or personal feelings.

*565 602 57 181 183 Among *zamad*, however, a much warmer ideal of human relations obtains.

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At around ten years the Amhara girl leaves the shepherd's work once and for all and spends all her time about the house. She becomes increasingly useful with kitchen work—chopping onions, grinding pepper, baking *ǐnjarā*. Bit by bit she learns all the arts of the housewife, including how to make good *doro wat*, a hot chicken stew, the dish that really proves the mettle of an Amhara bride. By the age of twelve or thirteen she knows enough to manage a home by herself and is ripe for marriage, though her training is often capped by a period after marriage during which she works alongside her mother-in-law in the home of her husband's parents. Thus the Amhara social system sees to it that the adolescent girl, as well as the adolescent boy, is familiar with adult work responsibilities and prepared to shoulder them without much ado.

Toward Marital Roles

The transition to adult status in Amhara culture is related above all to the assumption of marital roles. The three events which more than anything else establish one as an adult are marriage, moving into one's own house, and begetting a child.

Preparation for the roles of spouse and parent is more or less continuous throughout childhood, so that nearly all Amhara enter marriage as a matter of course and at an early age. Strong identifications are formed through virtually constant association with the parent of the same sex during adolescence, and to a large extent throughout childhood. When they are not out tending the herds, girls are working around the house in the company of their mothers, and boys are off in the fields or going on trips with their fathers. This identification is strengthened by experimental play within children's groups as well. It has been observed that tiny boys and girls play "marriage" and "house" with considerable sophistication, even to the point of pretending to send a messenger to the bride's parents to announce that she had been proven a virgin.[5]

With regard to premarital preparation for adult sexual functions, however, a double standard does exist. Although public norms require boys to be virgin at marriage, and one hears it said that "in the old days" this norm was strictly enforced, premarital sexual experimentation for boys is regarded as a natural occurrence.* In practice, and according to the norms of the male adolescents themselves, boys are expected to have sexual experience before marriage so long as it is carried out quietly and with discretion. If a boy is still virgin by the end of his teens he may be referred to by one of his

* Indeed, one of the normal functions of maidservants in the well-to-do families has been to provide sexual initiation for adolescent boys.

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586 the Amhara. Both partners enter the marriage with the full understanding that if they do not get along they will be able to separate without much difficulty, each partner taking half the goods that were accumulated during the marriage as well as the land and other private property each brought into the marriage. Only after several years of married life, which have resulted in children, and probably a separation followed by rapprochement or else divorce and remarriage, is the Amhara defined by his culture as a complete adult, a *mulu sɛ̄t* or *mulu saw*.

885 [851] [586] [587]

867 *From Generation to Generation*

Through the agency of his family of orientation, then, the Amhara adolescent automatically is prepared for adult work responsibilities and launched into married life. Continuity of the social system, however, also depends on the maintenance of a moral order that transcends the narrow commitments of kinship units. What of those sentiments that should dispose the young Amhara to conform with the more general norms of adult society?

[577] [779] The Abyssinian moral order rests primarily upon two pillars: the profession of Christianity and the institution of respect. These dispositions are firmly implanted during childhood and receive steady reinforcement during the transition to adulthood.

867 779 785 262 577 Maintenance of the fasting and dietary laws appears to be the central symbol of Christian identity in Amhara culture. Here again one may discern a pattern of progressively increased inculcation of norms throughout maturation. The taboos against pork and other unclean foods are taught at an early age and supported by references to unclean heathens ever after. More important, the Amhara learns step by step how to chasten his stomach in the traditional way. As soon as he is old enough to observe what goes on in his home, he is aware that meat products are not served to anyone on fasting days. Around the age of seven he begins his first regular fast, which means avoiding all food before noon, by observing the sixteen-day fast of *Felsatā*. The Wednesday and Friday fasts are supposed to be observed following this, though in practice it may be a few more years before the child keeps these weekly fasts regularly. Observance of the most trying fast of all, the eight-week fast of Lent, begins at about the age of fifteen.

867 779 793 577 [785] [688] At the same time, the adolescent comes increasingly under the jurisdiction of a member of the ordained clergy known as his *nafs abbāt* ("soul-father" or confessor). This is particularly so after marriage, when the young man may either continue to be attached to the soul-father of his own father or else may choose another one for himself. (The wife always takes the soul-father of her husband.) The soul-father serves as an agent of moral control by prescribing penance for his confessants when he learns of such infractions of the Christian rules as breaking the fasts.

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ically established cycle) is the only way to catch malaria. We Ethiopians know better. We know that one can *also* catch malaria from drinking the water in places where the Anopheles breed."[25]

The ambivalence toward Western science represented by this statement and by the persistence of analogous attitudes among many educated Ethiopians undoubtedly brings the individuals in question a degree of security that would be lost were they to abandon the traditional, unscientific belief system *in toto*. Perhaps a more solid sort of security could be derived from a program of education which not only imparts scientific information and attitudes, but also educates people to adapt themselves to the changes which the introduction of science involves.

Taste.—In matters of taste, Ethiopia's modern adolescents range from extreme traditionalism to extreme Westernism, with most of them preferring both traditional and European or American patterns in varying proportions. Of food the students tend to prefer the traditional varieties, most popular of which are *doro wat* and *ǐnjarā*. Among Western foods they are fondest of pastries and Italian *pasta*. On the other hand, they are more inclined toward Western beverages than Ethiopian ones. The most popular Western beverages are, for the secondary students, soft drinks, and for the college students, beer; among Ethiopian drinks they prefer *ṭallā* first and milk second.

With regard to their manner of eating, the students' taste is traditional in that most prefer to eat nowhere but within the home, and to eat with their hands rather than use silverware; but it is Westernized in that most prefer eating at their own individual places rather than all together with others out of a common *ǐnjarā* basket. Opinion is most divided on the matter of exchanging *gurshā*, a morsel of food which one places in another's mouth. The slight majority who reject this old custom do so because they find it "noisy," "childish," "unsanitary," or simply "out of fashion"; while those who still enjoy it do so chiefly because it "expresses affection."

On questions of dress it should be noted that traditionally the Amhara have sentimentalized their going barefoot as well as their national costume. But because of the practical advantages of wearing tailored clothes at work and using shoes, and perhaps still more because of their high prestige in the modernizing sector, virtually all of the students prefer the European fashion in these matters. On the other hand, with respect to women's wear and the sort of dress to be worn on holidays, the great majority opt the Ethiopian *shammā*.

In their aesthetic interests the students' taste varies considerably according to the medium. With regard to poetry and music, Ethiopian forms are preferred to Western ones, while Western forms of painting and dance are more popular with them than Ethiopian. Poetry stands as the most appreciated of

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Poetry stands as the most appreciated of all traditional forms of expression, and nearly two-thirds of the secondary and half the college students state that they compose Amharic verse themselves, on occasions ranging from public celebrations to private moments of great joy or sorrow. This is as might be expected in view of the tremendous importance of poetry in traditional Amhara culture (see chapters vi and vii). Painting, on the other hand, has played a rather inconspicuous part in Abyssinia. (Its genuine achievement in the high culture, the often remarkable Ethiopian miniatures, is frequently repudiated by modernizing Ethiopians for being too "backward.") Those students who do prefer Ethiopian-style paintings explain their preference on the grounds that they find them more intelligible and closer to Ethiopian life, and stress their value as reminders of Ethiopia's past.[26] The majority who prefer European-style paintings offer primarily mechanical reasons; they find them more "efficient," "systematic," and "accurate"—more "up-to-date."

In response to a question on their favorite type of foreign music, the students gave a wide variety of answers, ranging from "Oriental" and "religious" to "Rose, Rose, I Love You" and "Mozart." By far the most frequently mentioned musical preference was "classical" (20 per cent). This was followed by approximately equal percentages of preference for American popular songs; jazz and swing; rock 'n' roll; and Sudanese music. Of foreign dances, the most popular are the waltz and the tango (17 per cent each), followed at some distance by rock 'n roll, cha cha cha, and jitterbug. In their movie preferences, finally, historical (17 per cent) and educational (12 per cent) films are the favorites, followed by war, detective, and adventure films.

One other area of consumption should be discussed in this context: the use of cigarettes. To the tradition-minded Amhara smoking symbolizes all that is objectionable in Western culture, while to some of the modern adolescents it symbolizes the excitement and "life" of modernity. The number of these latter is not really very high, at least not among those still in school; but it is noteworthy that emphatic rejection of smoking by most of the students is based primarily on the rationalistic arguments that it is injurious to health and wastes money, rather than on the traditional argument that it is sinful and counter to Christian custom. The most violent reactions of any, however, were aroused by the question: "How do you feel about women smoking?" In the secondary school sample to which this question was posed, disapproval was practically unanimous, and the comments included "makes me ashamed," "it is scaring," "I could choke her to death," and "worse than hell itself."

A few minor differences in taste appear in connection with differences in sex and school attended. The female students in our secondary school sample show a greater partiality to native foods than do the males, and, on the other hand, greater interest in Western music and dance. Peculiarities in the sub-

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Amharic proverb, and even the Emperor when visiting a school expects students to remain seated if they are at the dining table when he arrives.

Some indication of the comparative significance of this concern about eating and drinking in the Amhara psyche is afforded by a recent cross-cultural investigation of dreams. Obtained from samples of young male respondents in Ethiopia, Nigeria, and the United States, the dreams were evaluated with respect to the presence or absence of themes of "manifest orality": scenes of someone desiring, looking for, or consuming food or drink. The proportion of Ethiopian respondents (mostly Orthodox Amhara from the Gondar area) who revealed manifest orality in their dreams was found to be *64 per cent*. By contrast, the proportion of those in a sample of non-Muslim Nigerians whose dreams showed manifest orality was 38 per cent, and that in the sample of Americans was only 22 per cent.[11]

The Amhara custom of giving *gurshā* plays up the erotic component of eating. *Gurshā* means "mouthful" and, as already noted, refers to a wad of food which one places in another's mouth, usually as a gesture of affection. *Gurshā* are exchanged between husband and wife and among relatives and friends. They are often given to children, especially in families of higher status, and to favored servants and retainers as well. The *gurshā* is of such meaning in Amhara experience that it is referred to in a number of Amharic idioms. First of all it means a present or a tip—literally, *pourmanger*. It also refers to the charge of a gun: the gun is a beloved object, and a *gurshā* is what one places in its mouth. In contemporary usage, it refers to flashlight batteries.

In connection with love and many other subjects, a good deal of the imagery of Amharic verse relates in one way or another to eating and drinking. The following sample of proverbs and couplets may convey some of the flavor of this phenomenon:

Ṭajj• has no specks; a poor man has no friends.

• • •

[Use] proverbs in conversation; [drink] *ṭajj* in a carafe.

• • •

Hand and fly-whisk; mouth and *ĭnjarā*† [go together].

• • •

No matter how much one plows, nothing tastes so good as *goman*.‡

• *Ṭajj*, it may be remembered, is the Ethiopian wine made of honey.

† *Ĭnjarā* is the staple pancake.

‡ *Goman* is a kind of cabbage plant that requires no plow cultivation.

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155 gratifications are not enjoyed wholly without conflict. In actuality, traits which reflect anxiety about the prospect of oral gratification are no less conspicuous in Amhara culture than the phenomena we have just been discussing.

155 262 Negative attitudes regarding oral gratification appear, first of all, in the scope and variety of the restrictions placed on eating. From both their Judaic and their Christian traditions the Abyssinians have taken over nearly every restriction on eating available. The chief exception to this is the Judaic injunction against eating blood, which Abyssinian custom permits. But they have retained intact the Semitic ban on unclean animals—those which lack a split hoof, upper teeth, or do not chew the cud. Their dread of pork is so strong that to some extent they feel closer to Muslims, who also avoid pork, than to Western Christians.

155 785 They have likewise retained and elaborated on the norms concerning fasting found in early Christianity. With respect to the number and harshness of the fasts it prescribes, Amhara-Tigre custom is probably the strictest in the world. In the rigor of its fasting laws the Ethiopian Church surpasses its sister religions of Eastern Orthodoxy—the Coptic, Syrian, Armenian, and Indian Orthodox Churches. On fasting days no food or drink is to be tasted before early afternoon. Thereafter, no sort of meat, fowl, milk, or eggs may be eaten, which reduces the Amhara's post meridiem diet on fasting days to grains and pulse.

Such fasting days occur on every Wednesday and Friday of the year, except those which come during the eight weeks after Easter. There are, in addition, many special fasts in the course of the year. Some of these, like the month-long fast before Pentecost and the two months prior to Christmas, are observed only by clergy and elders. Others must be observed by everyone, though children are led into them gradually. These universal fasts include the eight weeks before Easter, plus a three-day fast during the week before Lent; two days before Christmas; and sixteen days preceding the festival of the Assumption of Mary in August. Total abstinence is prescribed for a period of forty-eight hours before Easter. All together, the ordinary Amhara is supposed to fast 165 days each year; for the devout person the total approaches 250 days.

155 276 773 784 The taboo on the use of tobacco presents another area in which oral gratification is suppressed. Two myths are told to explain this taboo. One is that the tobacco plant originally grew out of the intestines of the heretic Arius. The other is that on the day of the Crucifixion all plants except tobacco withered and died. In any case, smoking is regarded as a grave sin among traditional Amhara, and one who has been suspected of using tobacco is not permitted to kiss the Cross.

121 784 785 155 One could argue that these taboos and fasting customs are simply cultural

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

phenomena, traits inherited from earlier traditions and retained through inertia, and that no psychological processes need be invoked in describing them. But this argument fails to explain why, in view of the harmful physical and political consequences of their excessive fasting, the Amhara should have developed in the direction of increasing rather than alleviating their fasting burden. For Abyssinia's commitment to fasting was well known by her enemies, and used to her disadvantage: Ahmad Grāñ took advantage of the country's weakness during Lent to launch his attacks at that time year after year, and the Galla hordes who succeeded him did likewise. The argument also fails to explain why the taboos on pork and tobacco, and the fasting prescriptions, should have been pushed to the forefront of Amhara Christian consciousness. For observance of these mores is considered the very crux of Christianity by traditional Amhara. Amhara often refer to fasting as the most important part of their religion. If a person fails to fast, his relatives are technically absolved from the duty of providing memorial feasts for him when he dies; let his soul wander in darkness! Fasting more than anything else protects them from the devil and enhances the likelihood of their entering paradise.

Apart from their adherence to these cultural norms, moreover, the Amhara also manifest anxiety regarding oral gratification at the purely psychological level. There is, on the one hand, a constant undertone of concern among Amhara about getting enough to eat, even under favorable agricultural conditions. On the other hand, there is a good deal of concern about the consequences of eating too much. There is much worry among the Amhara about the dangers of excessive eating at the conclusion of periods of fasting. There is also the fear that if one indulges in eating and drinking he may become uncontrollably hostile, a fear expressed in the previously mentioned notion of *ţegābaññā*. These and other forms of anxiety about oral gratification are expressed in a number of folk tales, in which eating, drinking, singing, talking, or simply opening one's mouth result in such misfortunes as sickness, loss of property, and death.[20] A similar theme appears in the epic *Glory of Kings:* the Queen of Sheba, in satisfying her thirst by drinking from a goblet which King Solomon had placed in her bedroom, thereby forfeited her right to immunity from his amorous desires and was obliged to yield to his embrace.

Ambivalence regarding oral aggressiveness, finally, may be discerned in the Amhara's anxiety about being eaten, an anxiety which should probably be interpreted as an externalization of unacceptable oral-sadistic impulses. Traditional Amhara have a morbid fear of being "eaten" by those with the evil eye, *budā* and *ţayb*, men who are believed to destroy their victim by invisibly sucking his blood. It is largely because of this fear that children are kept away from strangers. Similar projections appear in connection with other well-known figures in Amhara culture. Another fearful object is the *çhirāq*, a giant

*759 without the assistance of another practitioner is him-
752 self identifiable as a kusil herbalist (yikusil med-
haniyt awakiy), a non-wogeyša professional identity.

752 While the splint is worn, the sickman is directed
• 262 to eat quantities of a restorative (atmit); for frac-
*[192] ture, this consists of fatty meats, which are believed conducive to the mending of bones. After the splint has been removed, the affected region is regularly massaged with the unguent compound which had been used during diagnosis and therapy. The massage aims to restore normal flexibility to the affected body part. Some therapists continue the atmit regimen during this period and even beyond it.

*759 Alone among Amhara secular practitioners, the
752 tagañ practices a therapy which immobilizes the sickman for an extended period. During recuperation, therapeutic massages must continue, and the instability of the sickman's jimat preclude his moving about. When a tagañ is famous for difficult therapies, such as breaking and resetting improperly set bones or treating paralyzed limbs, he attracts sickmen from great dis-
[758] tances. Since these sickmen cannot leave the tagañ until pronounced cured, they require access to local accomodations and the assistance of a relative or servant to prepare their meals and tend to other personal

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemdèr

*278 call for specific parts of named botanicals---either root, leaf, stem, shoot, fruit, flower, seed, whole, *[192] rind or juice. Botanical parasites (takiltila), identified in recipes by the plant upon which they grow, are also frequent ingredients. 2) Typically, recipes combine these herbal ingredients with foods. Virtually every generic foodstuff is represented in some recipe---water, dairy products, eggs, alcoholic beverages, honey, citrus juice, cereal grains, spices, oil seeds, and meat. Often, recipes set special requirements for these ingredients. For example, animal products (flesh, organs, milk, butter, whey) may be required from animals and fowls whose sex (male, female, castrated) and coloring are designated in the recipe (a desired color, combination of colors, or color scheme shared by mother and offspring). Similarly, recipes sometimes prescribe beer or bread which are made of grains not locally grown (wheat, barley, red tef, white tef, millet). 3) Lastly, some recipes require the sickman to consume ingredients which the Amhara regards as * 278 bizarre or repulsive. Included here are exotic substances • 262 such as battery carbon, gasoline, and rust; ingredients which are ordinarily forbidden to Christians,[4] such as

[4]Ethiopians, Copts, Muslims, Jews as well as Agaw pagans adhere to the injunctions of Leviticus regarding proscribed foods.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

* 278
• 262 pork, bat flesh, meat of wild birds, insects; and repulsive stuffs, such as cow or goat urine and donkey milk.

* 278
222 Gathering, Processing, and Administering. The gathering of herbals for medicinal recipes assumes, first, accurate knowledge of their appearance and location. Many medicinals are exotics whose appearance and even whose names are unknown by most men; many of these must be searched out in distant and barely accessible corners of the highland plateau, others can be found only in the malarial lowlands. From the time an herbal is located until it is processed together with the remaining materia medica, it must be handled in a prescribed fashion. During gathering, while the herbal is being cut or pried from its natural surroundings, there is the danger that its latent curing powers will be lost. For leafy botanicals, particularly takiltila, precautions must be taken against diffusing these powers into the earth through some object simultaneously in contact with the botanical and the ground. Here, a weighted noose may be used. Many prescribed techniques of gathering are only loosely identified as precautionary, since the specific dangers each guards against are unknown. These techniques specify the equipment to be used, the quality of the gatherer, and circumstantial conditions. Thus, if a recipe requires that a branch be severed with a knife, it often adds that the instrument be unused, or made of a single piece of

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751 758 the sunlight.[6] After the disease symptoms have disappeared, and the convalescent has regained his former vitality, some precautions may still be followed to prevent the return of the original syndrome, to which he [262] may have developed a vulnerability. For example, the former sickman may be forbidden to eat one or more of the foodstuffs which were included among the materia [278] medica of his cure. Often, an amulet containing dried materia medica of the primary medicine is also worn.

*278 Pharmacological Combinations. In the abstract, Amhara pharmacology can be considered as a corpus of discrete and varied instructions for a) conserving the latent healing power of botanicals, and b) converting this power into therapeutically effective agents. Seen from this perspective, Amhara pharmacolog y has the potential for a large number of logically possible combinations of instructions, ranging from those with few directions of any kind, to combinations with elaborate instructions in each pharmacological category. Although, empirically, Amhara herbal therapies probably fall short of the potential number of combinations, the combinations charac-

[757] [834] [6]Primary syphilis, in particular, sets elaborate requirements---the removal of all hair from the body, head, and face; in addition, there is a period of abstinence from coitus.

criteria. His personal interest means to the student rapid advancement through the curriculum, dining at the master's table, and enjoying privileged information of a non-ecclesiastical nature. Without his patronship, a student is committed to years of uncertainty and physical misery, scraping to meet his subsistence needs, paying his "tuition" in demeaning services, such as gathering the master's wood and tilling his garden, and in deferential performances, particularly washing the master's feet and those of his visitors.

The kiyne student is further troubled by the many ailments which are his lot. He lives, with one or two of his mates, in a wretched lean-to of twigs and wild grasses, which proves to be poor protection against the cold winter rains. Often he owns only the toga on his back, and it, like him, remains unwashed for the duration of the long dry season. Thus, ikek (scrofula) becomes his badge, and kurtimat (joint pains) and weba (fever) his recurrent companions. The student's diet is his special concern, since it conspicuously lacks the combination of wholesome wot (stew) and injera (pancake-like bread) necessary to sustain good health. He obtains most of his food by begging in the town and local hamlets, where he generally receives scraps of stale injera bread, always inadequate and potentially pathogenic (i.e., likift bearing, threatening fever and

severe abdominal pain). The wot he eats is invariably the humblest type, aliyca, lacking the cayenne-based ingredient (berberiy) necessary to man and digestive wosfat. His injera is made of pulses instead of proper cereals, and often he has nothing but a handful of parched grain (kolow) with which to satisfy his hunger and truculent wosfat. In addition to persistent abdominal complaints (yihod himem), students are often afflicted with dafint (night-blindness) which is particularly stressful in the context of the student's nocturnal activities.

There is also danger from animals, the vicious and often rabid hamlet dogs, which plague him as he begs; from ganels which gather outside the church yard waiting to suffocate him in his sleep, to tempt him to sacrilege with their calls just as they tempted Saint Basil, to waylay him when he goes beyond the church yard for nocturnal urination.

The Growth of Mercantile Interests. With the exception of those few students who enjoy the kiyne master's patronage, or who receive parental support, the young scholars must periodically interrupt the course of study for excursions into the lowlands in order to meet their subsistence needs. In early September, after the rains have ended and the countryside is covered with verdure, kiyne students journey to the kola lands to gather the wild gramta grass. The gramta must be sun dried for